

European Science, Engineering and Technology Highlights¹ JULY 2014

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¹ Note: If you would like additional information or background, please feel free to contact Carine Polliotti at cpolliot@nsf.gov

1 European council of Ministers approves key initiatives in research collaboration



The last European Competitiveness Council formally took note of the launch of the €22 billion (\$29.8 billion) innovation investment package which includes the Eurostars-2 program.

The Council also welcomed the annual report of the Strategic Forum for International Scientific and Technological Cooperation (SFIC), an advisory body on the external dimension of the European Research Area (ERA).

New joint initiatives are now to be launched with India, China, USA, Brazil and Russia.

Finally, the work program of the upcoming Italian Presidency of the EU in the areas of research and innovation was endorsed by European Ministers: the upcoming Presidency will pay particular attention to the development of the ERA, including its external dimension and encouraging regional partnerships.

Source:

http://www.eurekanetwork.org/about/-/journal_content/56/10137/4228281?refererPlid=10195



2 A roadmap for the European Research Area by mid-2015



Launched by the European Union in 2000, the European Research Area, or ERA, aims to remove barriers for research workers to access funding in another European country, making cross-border collaboration between innovators easier by combining national research programs into transnational research projects.

The majority of research programs in Europe are run in a local, isolated way, meaning researchers often miss out on the opportunities that international collaboration offers – sharing expertise and more easily accessing new markets for the product of their research.

The ERA is governed by a committee representing each EU Member State and the European Commission. This committee is developing an ERA roadmap to more efficiently implement the objectives set for this initiative. This roadmap should be ready mid-2015 and a first meeting this month will outline its contents.

Using national funds for international cooperation is also the raison d'être of EUREKA, the network of national innovation funding agencies in Europe. EUREKA took off 27 years ago and has so far enabled the realization of more than 5,000 trans-border research projects, mobilizing €35 billion (\$47.4 billion) in national research and private funding.

Source:

http://www.eurekanetwork.org/about/-/journal_content/56/10137/4218960?refererPlid=10195



3 European Commission at 2014 EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF)



European Commission President José Manuel Barroso launched the EuroScience Open Forum 2014 (ESOF 2014), Europe's leading biennial science conference, held this year in Copenhagen. Research, Innovation and Science Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn gave a keynote speech to delegates on June 24. Other prominent speakers during the week included Robert-Jan Smits, European Commission Director-General for Research and Innovation, European Research Council President Professor Jean-Pierre Bourguignon and Chief Scientific Advisor to President Barroso,

Anne Glover.

What is ESOF?

ESOF is Europe's largest general science meeting. The biennial gathering brings together researchers, entrepreneurs, innovators, policy makers and the public from all over Europe to discuss new discoveries and debate the direction that science is taking.

Full article available at:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-435_en.htm?locale=en



4 Europe: Governing body of the European Research Council to be appointed early 2015



Nine top scientists will appoint 22 pairs to govern €13.1 billion (\$17.8 billion) in funding, to be dedicated to academic research in Horizon 2020.

Full article available at:

http://www.eurekanetwork.org/about/-/journal_content/56/10137/4231330?refererPlid=10195



5 Denmark: An international partnership takes the stage at ESOF 2014



The EuroTech Universities Alliance, an international partnership dedicated to producing new knowledge and translating it into action for the benefit of society, will highlight innovations in communication and education as well as technology at the Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF 2014), June 21-26 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Full article available at:

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2014-06/tum-aip061614.php



6 Estonia: RD&I strategy for 2014-2020



"Knowledge Based Estonia 2014-2020" is Estonia's third strategy on research and development and innovation. While the previous strategies focused primarily on developing Estonia's capability in research and development and innovation, the new strategy aims to use the created potential for the good of Estonia's development and economic growth. In the setting of priorities the methodology of smart specialization served as basis.

Facts sheet available at:

http://erawatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/erawatch/opencms/information/country_pages/ee/policydocument/policydoc_0009



7 Finland: Universities will not charge fees for non-Europeans



The pilot project in which nine Finnish universities and 10 polytechnics charged tuition fees from some non-European masters students closes at the end of this year. But already most of the institutions have announced that they will not claim fees from students admitted this coming autumn. During the pilot, higher education institutions could charge fees from students from outside the European Union and European Economic Area who were admitted to a university or polytechnic Masters program delivered in a foreign language. Institutions could independently determine the amount they would charge.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140613071332364>



8 Norway more innovative than previous surveys suggest



In a new survey, Statistics Norway finds that Norwegian trade and industry has far more innovators than indicated by previous international surveys of innovation capacity.

The difference can largely be explained by survey methodology. This time, Statistics Norway measured innovation on its own, whereas the previous surveys measured a combination of innovation and research and development activity.

Full article available at:

http://www.forskningsradet.no/en/Newsarticle/Norway_more_innovative_than_previous_surveys_suggest/1253997022614



9 Romanian researchers stay home to take part in EU programs



EU-funded research projects in Romania are helping the country retain talent. Young researchers, who might be tempted to look for a career abroad, find they can contribute at an even higher level by staying at home and participating in exciting projects. They still get to travel, work with specialists in other European countries, and make important private sector contacts.

Full article available at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/romanian-researchers-stay-home-take-part-eu-programmes>



10 Spain: Education authorities mull over UK-like loan system



Education authorities are considering replacing Spain's student grant system with loans in the same format as seen in the United Kingdom, given that higher education costs to the state have rocketed in recent years. Secretary of State for Universities, Professional and Vocational Training and Education, Montserrat Gomendio, pointed out that in Spain students are given "sizeable sums of money" enabling them to study without getting a part-time job on top, and do not have to pay it back when they finish college.

Spain has a total of 82 universities, with an average of one per year having been created in the past decade, offering 7,000 degrees to 1.5 million students, and until recently they all received government grants covering at least tuition fees and normally a subsidy towards living costs.

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140619211053354>



11 United Kingdom: Loans to foreign students blocked



Large numbers of students from mainland Europe face being blocked from taking out loans at British taxpayers' expense after it emerged that thousands of Bulgarians and Romanians attempted to wrongly claim more than £65 million (US\$110 million) of public money.

Ministers have pledged "stringent new measures" to prevent students from European Union member states claiming financial support in Britain amid fears over widespread abuse of the system.

A study last year found that around 40 per cent of the total number of EU students who are eligible for repayments are failing to do so Photo: ROB JUDGES

Full article available at:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140619211641116>



12 United Kingdom: An uncertain future for Scottish research



Both sides in the Scottish independence debate stepped up their campaigns last week as they marked the milestone of 100 days to go until the referendum. A 'yes' vote on September 18 could have major effects on Scottish universities: financially, for research and for teaching.

If an independent Scotland were to become a member of the European Union – a probability – Scotland's universities would no longer be able to charge rest-of-UK students tuition fees.

But the major area in which independence would have a profound effect is research. First, there is the risk of scholars in an independent Scotland losing access to funding from Research Councils UK (RCUK); second, there is the possibility of Scottish government interference. Scottish universities currently win 13% of RCUK funding, noteworthy in a country with a population that is 8.4% of the UK's.

Source:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20140612205058484>

